Nickence is a surname derived from the Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) personal name Nikense, historically translated as “Little Goose.” Ojibwe names were traditionally descriptive and relational rather than fixed hereditary surnames, and many were later recorded phonetically by missionaries and United States census enumerators during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this context, Nikense appears in historical and genealogical records associated with Ojibwe communities in the Upper Great

Lakes region, and the modern spelling Nickence reflects Anglicized orthographic variation rather than a European patronymic origin.

Sources:
Frederic Baraga, A Dictionary of the Otchipwe Language (1878)
United States Federal Census records, Wisconsin (19th–early 20th centuries)
John D. Nichols, Ojibwe historical linguistics
Anton Treuer, Ojibwe language and cultural scholarship